

Royal Mésalliances.

BY A. DE BURGH.

“Amor omnia vincit.”



HERE is one conclusion to which all psychologists have come, and that is that love is one of the strongest agents which move human beings to action. There seems to be no barrier insurmountable when it is a question of gaining one's heart's desire; there is no pain which does not become insignificant if suffered in the service of love; and for the one cherished above all others patience and perseverance come never stronger to the fore--all obstacles appear of little importance, while even reason yields to the dictates of love and passion. However near to each other human beings may be brought by pity and sympathy, there is no doubt that love wields still a greater power in this direction; neither rank nor station, wealth nor position, are considered when the heart speaks.

Therefore it is only natural that marriages between different classes are so frequent, and as those born in the purple are of the same clay as the “common herd,” there is nothing extraordinary or abnormal in so-called “mésalliances,” even when Royal personages unite themselves to persons in the more humble walks of life. The tendency of our century has been to level more and more the barriers which separate class from class, and the intercourse between the highest and lowest has become more frequent, more free, and much more intimate than was the case in former times.

When love is in question, reason, self-interest, sometimes even honour, go for nothing; they do not weigh in the balance. Self-interest is generally considered one of the most important elements that influence a man's or woman's action. It cannot, however, compete with love.

But it is by no means our intention to write an essay on a subject which has so frequently been treated by the ablest writers of the day. We simply wish to introduce briefly and prosaically a subject which is of more or

less psychological and social interest; namely, the mésalliances of notable personages, and our prefatory remarks may be taken as an explanation of the action of those in high positions whom it is intended to bring before our readers as having followed the dictates of their hearts.

Many years ago, when Royalties considered themselves of a different race—indeed, almost demi-gods—it was thought quite impossible that they could intermarry with commoners, and for such members of reigning families as were courageous enough to break the ridiculous law that shackled them, and married men or women belonging to the lower classes, a new form of marriage was specially invented, viz., “morganatic” marriage, which is in existence even to this day. In such cases neither child nor wife can bear the title or acquire the rank of the father or the husband, although the marriage is legitimate.

Whether marriages of the class which we here specially consider were or are happy or not, it is not our task to investigate; but we may say that, as far as is known, the same rule prevails as in common marriages—some are happy, very happy, while others are fraught with misery and wretchedness.

We must include in this present article the first King of Belgium, who, as Prince of Coburg, married for his first wife the only child of King George IV. of Great Britain and Ireland, whom he lost within a year of their marriage. Some time later Prince Leopold consoled himself by marrying morganatically the celebrated actress, Charlotte Bauer, with whom he lived a very happy life, but whom he divorced when he accepted the throne of Belgium. His son by Charlotte Bauer is the well-known Baron von Eppinghoven, who is married to the daughter of the British Consul at Nice.

Another scion of the same House, Prince Ferdinand of Coburg, also married an actress, Elise Hensler, an American by birth. He



PRINCESS ELVIRA, WHO MARRIED THE PAINTER, TOLCHI.
From a Photo. by Adèle, Vienna.

was formerly the husband of Queen Maria of Portugal, and one of the handsomest men of the present century. He received by legislative act and Royal decree the title of King Consort at the time of his marriage. So much affection prevailed between him and his Queen-wife that she began to abandon to him the reins of government. This caused great jealousy and ill-will amongst the people of Portugal, and ended in a revolution which forced the King Consort into a retirement from which he did not emerge until the death of the Queen, when he became Regent for the two years which elapsed until his eldest son attained his majority. It was after this that he married again as mentioned above, and devoted the remainder of his days to the collection of art-treasures, which he bequeathed at his death, a few years ago, to his American widow, who is still living.

Only very lately Princess Elvira (whose portrait is given on the previous page), daughter of Don Carlos, Duke of Madrid, eloped with a Roman artist, Tolchi, to whom she was afterwards married. She was only following in the footsteps of a somewhat long list of ladies of Royal blood. Of the reigning House of Spain the Princesses Isabella and Josephine, grand-aunts of the present youthful King, eloped with the men who subsequently became their morganatic husbands.

Princess Isabella left the house of her father at Enghien, near Paris, in the most romantic fashion—by a rope-ladder—in the middle of the night, the handsome Polish Count Gurowski, to whom she had lost her heart, having a carriage waiting at the garden-gate. The couple fled to this country, where they were married. The union did not turn out happily, and when the Count died, twelve years ago at Paris, he had been separated for years from the Princess.

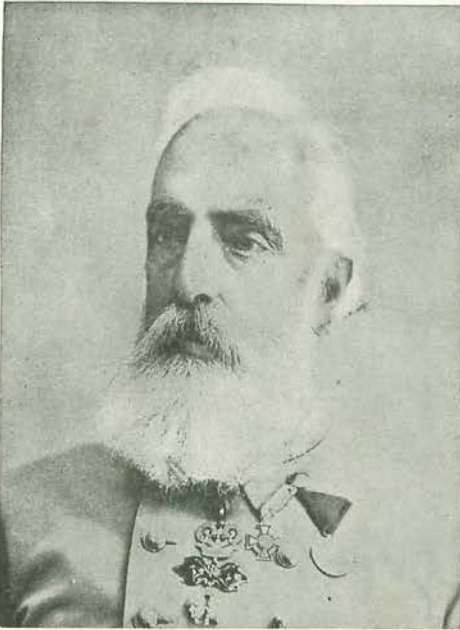
Josephine was living at Madrid, at the Royal Palace, with her sister-in-law, Queen Isabella, at the time she eloped with a poet and journalist, who had started in life as a reporter for a daily newspaper in Havana. His story reads almost like a fairy tale. He had become infatuated with the daughter of a rich Cuban planter, but his suit was opposed by the father of the girl in the most contemptuous manner. He told the lad that he was of far too low origin ever to dream of marrying his daughter. Enraged beyond measure, the young reporter exclaimed that he would show people who he was by marrying a Princess.

He went to Madrid, where, after meeting

with many rebuffs and suffering want and even hunger, he finally succeeded in making a name for himself as a poet and author. Several poems which he dedicated to Princess Josephine sufficed to turn her head. She made the poet's acquaintance, and they soon became enamoured of one another. Finally they eloped from Madrid, and, after a secret marriage at Valladolid, made their way to Paris.

Consternation prevailed in the Royal Family and in Court circles when their flight became known. Both the Court and Government made strenuous efforts to have the marriage invalidated, but in vain. The people were delighted with the union, and manifested in the strongest manner their dissatisfaction with the sentence of banishment pronounced against the fugitive lovers. After a while, however, the good-nature of Queen Isabella prevailed, and the couple returned to Spain with honour, the Sovereign receiving the popular poet in every way as her brother-in-law. The Royal Family had at no time reason to regret the marriage, and the ex-journalist's three sons are perhaps the most popular, and certainly the most accomplished, members of the family.

The ancient House of Austria, the Hapsburgs, has been especially remarkable for the number of morganatic marriages amongst its members. Considering the lineage (the Hapsburgs claim descent from Julius Cæsar) and the strictness of the etiquette prevailing at the Austrian Court, and remembering the exclusiveness and the loftiness of the position of the Imperial House, it seems at first surprising to see scions of this highly autocratic and proud family allying themselves to subjects in the humbler walks of life. Early in this century (1827) Europe was startled by the announcement of the marriage of Archduke John, afterwards for a time the nominal head of the then still existing German Confederation (Bund), with Anna Plochl, the daughter of a peasant posting-master of a small Styrian village. The story of the meeting and courtship is well worth repeating. The Archduke was coming from Italy, on his way to Vienna, where his immediate presence was commanded, and when at Aussee (it was before the time of railways) there was no postilion at hand to take him on his way; the postmaster's daughter donned the dress of a postilion, and drove the Archducal carriage to the next station. The youthful Prince discovered the sex of his driver, admired her pluck, fell in love with her, and made her his wife. She was created



ARCHDUKE HENRY OF AUSTRIA.
From a Photo. by Stoklas, Baden.

Baroness Brandhof, and by the present Emperor in 1850 Countess of Meran. Her descendants still flourish in Austria as Counts of Meran.

At Budapest it is well known that Count Louis Batthyany, who was shot by the Austrian troops in the market-place of that city for his complicity in the insurrection of 1848, could have effected his escape the night before his execution, had he consented to fly with the Archduchess Maria, who was deeply in love with him.

One of the most remarkable marriages of this century to which one of the daughters of the Austrian Emperor was forced to consent, and which has always been considered a most humiliating alliance for the ancient House of Hapsburg, was the marriage of the Archduchess Marie Louise to Napoleon I. The ex-Empress entered afterward into a matrimonial alliance with Count Neuperg, and the Austrian Princes Montenuovo of to-day are the descendants of that marriage. Napoleon's son, the Duke of Reichstadt (King of Rome), who was naturally considered a most inconvenient personage, ruined his health by dissipation, into which, as many believe to this day, he was intentionally led by those who had the care of him.

In more modern times we can record twomorganatic marriages in this Imperial House. Archduke Henry married an actress, and in

consequence was compelled to resign his rank in the army and was banished from the Court; however, many years afterwards, through the intervention of the late Empress Elizabeth, Francis Joseph forgave his cousin, whose wife received the title of Baroness Weideck.

But the saddest episode is that known as the mystery of Johann Orth, one of the most remarkable romances in the dynastic history of Europe in this century. The Archduke John Salvator of Tuscany, a nephew of the Emperor Francis Joseph, had fallen in love with an actress and singer, Ludmilla Hubel, whom he married in spite of all family opposition, renouncing at the same time all his rights, privileges, and rank, and assuming the name of Orth, after one of his castles. The romantic marriage was celebrated secretly, but in a perfectly legal manner, by the Registrar of Islington, and was witnessed by the Consul-General of Austria in London.

Johann Orth next bought, in 1891, a fine ship in Liverpool, which he re-named *Santa Margarita*; and so anxious was he to guard against the vessel being recognised, that he stipulated that all drawings and photographs of it should be handed over to him, and these he burned with his own hands; moreover, he caused all portraits and negatives of himself and of his wife to be bought



BARONESS WEIDECK, WIFE OF ARCHDUKE HENRY.
From a Photo. by Lippe, Vienna.



JOHANN ORTH (ARCHDUKE JOHN).
From a Photo. by A. Rod, Lins.

up at any price, and these were likewise destroyed. We are giving here only absolute facts.*

Shortly afterwards the ex-Archduke and his wife set sail for South America, and the vessel was duly reported to have arrived at Monte Video, and departed for a destination unknown. But from that moment every trace was lost of the ship and all on board, no news as to her fate having ever been heard, although many a search has been made along the coast by order of the Emperor of Austria and his Government. Adventurers and treasure-seekers have been at work, as it was well known that Johann Orth had on board over a quarter of a million pounds in specie; it is believed that he intended to have bought an estate in Chili with the money and to have settled there, but that the vessel foundered off Cape Horn during a terrific storm which raged on the coast shortly after the ship had left. From time to time since then the most startling rumours have been set afloat about the missing Prince having turned up: one being that he had been one of the leaders of the Chilian rebellion, having divided his treasure among his crew, burned his ship, landed on a lonely coast, etc. His own mother, who

died only a few months ago at the Castle Orth, believed her son alive to her very last hour, and expected his return. The Swiss Government is of a different opinion, and assumed the death of the Archduke, and paid over to Frau Orth's next-of-kin a large amount of money, which Johann Orth deposited as a settlement for his wife with the Swiss authorities before his departure, and there is little doubt that the *Santa Margarita* lies at the bottom of the sea, and that all on board perished.

The most recent morganatic marriage in the dynastic history of the Imperial House of Romanoff was the union a few years ago (very much against the wish of the Czar Alexander III.) of the Grand Duke Michael Michaelovitch with the then Countess Sophia de Merenberg, born in 1868, afterwards granted a special patent of nobility as Countess de Torby for herself and descendants by the reigning Grand Duke of Luxembourg, the step-brother of her father, Prince Nicolaus of Nassau. The accomplished Countess of Torby is, therefore, of Royal blood on her paternal side, Prince Nicolaus having, in 1867, also made a morganatic marriage with the Countess of Merenberg, the daughter of the great Russian poet, Poutchkine, whereby this Prince equally unselfishly renounced all his claims to the Grand Ducal throne. The Countess of Torby is a cousin of the Queen-Mother of Holland and the Duchess of



LUDMILLA HUBEL, WIFE OF JOHANN ORTH.
From a unique private Photo.

* With great difficulty we have been able to procure portraits of Johann Orth and his wife from photographs in the possession of a sister of Frau Orth, who lives in a small village in Switzerland, and we can vouch for their genuineness. These portraits have never before been reproduced.

Albany. The Grand Duke was formerly a colonel in the Russian army, but was, on his marriage, placed on the retired list. Since their marriage, which took place at San Remo early in 1891, the Grand Duke has resided with his family at Wiesbaden, or at his charming château on the Riviera.

Had Lieutenant Bariatinski possessed sufficient courage there would have been another mésalliance to record in the family of the Autocrat of All the Russias. The beautiful Grand Duchess Olga, the favourite daughter of Czar Nicholas I., was on the point of eloping with the lieutenant, when at the last moment his heart failed him, and he made a clean breast of the whole affair to His Majesty, with the result that the Grand Duchess was married at Charles of Würtemberg, afterwards King of that country, while the officer was rewarded with such rapid promotion that before he had of fifty he had attained the rank of field-marshal.

Two morganatic marriages, which are better known through the descendants thereof — some of whom have made our country their home, and are allied to our own Royal Family, and have endeared themselves amongst the people who know them well—are those of the late Duke Alexander of Würtemberg and the late Grand Duke Alexander of Hesse and the Rhine. The former married a Hungarian lady of ancient lineage, the Countess Claudine of Rhédey, who was created Countess Hohenstein, and their son is the Duke of Teck, whose daughter will be our future Queen.

The latter married in 1851 Julie Countess of Hanke, who was created Princess of

Battenberg, and had four sons and one daughter, all of whom are or were well known in England. The most brilliant of the brothers was no doubt Alexander, for some time reigning Prince of Bulgaria. He aspired to the hand of one of the charming sisters of the present Emperor of Germany, but the affair having fallen through, he retired to Austria, where the Emperor gave him the command of a regiment, and he married an opera-singer, who received a patent of nobility under the name of the Countess of Hartenau. The couple were, perhaps, the handsomest in Europe, and the early death of the gallant Prince was universally regretted. The Countess, his widow, still lives at Graz, in Styria, the last home of the loving and popular pair.



PRINCE ALEXANDER OF BATTENBERG.
From a Photograph.

once to Prince afterwards King of cowardly young such rapid pro- reached the age

The Italian Court has also had its romances. The mother of the present Queen of Italy was banished from the kingdom for ten years by her brother-in-law, King Victor Emanuel, for having eloped with an artillery officer. This match did not turn out a happy one, for the officer eventually tired of his Royal wife and committed suicide. It is a strange coincidence that the same King who displayed such rigour with his relative entered himself some years afterwards into a morganatic alliance with a vivandière, who survives him.



COUNTESS HARTENAU, WIFE OF PRINCE ALEXANDER.
From a Photo. by L. Bude, Graz.

A marriage which occasioned great interest in England, where it took place, was that of Oscar Carl August, Prince Bernadotte, formerly Duke of Gothland, the second son of King Oscar II. of Sweden and Norway. He married in 1888, at Bournemouth, Miss Ebba

Munk, lady-in-waiting to the Swedish Crown Princess. Miss Munk was the guest of Lady Cairns, and the wedding took place from her



MISS EBBA MUNK, WIFE OF PRINCE BERNADETTE.
From a Photo. by Florman, Stockholm.



PRINCE OSCAR BERNADETTE.
From a Photo. by Florman, Stockholm.

house. Prince Oscar had to resign all rights of succession to the Swedish throne for himself and his descendants. The five children of this romantic union have been granted a patent of nobility as Counts and Countesses of Wiborg in Gothland. Prince Bernadotte is commander in the Swedish navy, and lives with his family a very retired life, residing during winter in a villa at Stockholm, and in summer at the "Villa Fridhem" (Home of Peace). Both the Prince and Princess Bernadotte are extremely religious, and when the former is not on duty he and his wife are engaged in preaching and missionary work, both in Stockholm and in the country.

In Bavaria we have an instance of a Royal Prince having made two morganatic marriages. Prince Ludwig, the elder brother of the Royal oculist, Duke Carl Theodor, married first in 1859 an actress, Fräulein Mendel, who was created Baroness Wallersee, and, after her death in 1891, Fräulein Barth, who was given a patent of nobility under the style and title of Frau von Bartholf. He had before marrying also to resign his rights and patrimony to his younger brother. By his first wife he had a daughter who married Count Larisch, who obtained a divorce from her. A short time ago the Countess Larisch became the wife of the opera-singer Brucks.



DUKE LUDWIG OF BAVARIA.
From a Photo. by Baumann, Munich.



FRAU VON BARTHOLF, WIFE OF DUKE LUDWIG OF BAVARIA.
From a Photo. by Marx, Frankfurt.



COUNTESS LARISCH, WHO MARRIED HERR BRUCKS.
From a Photo. by Dittmar, Munich.



HERR BRUCKS, THE OPERA-SINGER.
From a Photo. by Müller, Munich.

The eldest daughter of Duke Carl Theodor, Princess Sophia of Bavaria, made also a pure love-match by marrying last year the Count Törring-Jettenbach, a scion of an old Bavarian noble house, but not of Royal blood.

A few years ago another young Bavarian Princess entered into an alliance which was not only romantic, but brought great grief to her parents and grand-parents. Princess

Elizabeth, the eldest daughter of Prince Leopold and the Archduchess Gisela, eldest child of the Emperor of Austria and the murdered Empress Elizabeth, ran away with the young Lieutenant Baron Otto von Seefried zu Buttenheim, and they were married at Genoa. The marriage was the more objectionable on account of the religion of the bridegroom, who is a Protestant, whereas the



COUNT TÖRRING-JETTENBACH.
From a Photo. by Stuffer, Munich.



PRINCESS SOPHIA OF BAVARIA.
From a Photo. by Stuffer, Munich.

Bavarian and Austrian families are strict Catholics. The alliance is not a happy one. Baron Seefried neglects his wife, who is now only twenty-five years of age, and the unfortunate Princess, who is deeply attached to her husband, leads a most melancholy life. She has lost her former rights, and has only gained a negligent husband.

In looking into the matter closely we must come to the conclusion that the number of morganatic marriages made by members of Royal Families increases year by year, and many are the Princes and Princesses who are ready to sacrifice their Royal prerogatives in order to try if they cannot find real happiness in a simpler home—life with the woman or man they love. Whether it is more likely for them to draw a prize in the marriage lottery by deviating from the rule we can scarcely judge, but certain it is that some of these marriages have turned out extremely happy ones. No doubt it is very difficult for a Princess to accustom herself to lead the life of a simple gentlewoman, and, in consequence, after the first passion has cooled off, the Princess is frequently much disappointed. The husband can also hardly be expected to maintain the deference after marriage towards his wife who has descended from her position in order to marry him, which fact makes the position for both extremely difficult. It is a much simpler matter for a Prince to



BARON SEEFRIED.
From a Photo. by Dittman, Munich.

upon as actually existing.

The Princess Sybilla of Hesse-Cassel, who was married a year ago to Herr von Fincke, is a remarkably beautiful girl, and she also possesses a considerable fortune, while Herr von Fincke is also possessed of moderate means, and it seems as if this marriage were a very happy one.

Princess Henrietta of Schleswig-Holstein leads a very contented life with her morganatic husband. The Princess Henrietta, having entirely given up all pretensions to Royal rank, lives the extremely simple life of a professor's wife at Kiel.

The instances we have here recited by no means exhaust the subject. However, we have selected the most prominent ones, and such as are of a particularly romantic nature. What a wealth of material the details of these mésalliances would afford the novelist could he only become fully acquainted with them!



PRINCESS ELIZABETH OF BAVARIA.
From a Photo. by Dittman, Munich.